CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	**Old County Line projects**
Proposed Implementation Date:	**Beginning June 2014**
Proponent:	**Clearwater Unit, Montana DNRC**
Location:	**Garnet Range road and Highway 200, Section 14 T13N R15W**
County:	**Missoula**

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

This proposed project is a combination of a timber permits, pre-commercial thinning, and fuel hazard reduction. Timber permits would be used to salvage ponderosa pine that are either infested with mountain pine beetle (*Dendroctonus ponderosae*) or are likely to be attacked. Over the past several years, the beetle infestation has increased in the area. Many areas along the highway have been attacked on both Montana DNRC and Lubrecht Experimental Forest land. There are large patches of smaller stemmed ponderosa pine that have been hit and killed by this pine beetle. There also are areas of overstocked stems, primarily Douglas-fir that provide "fire ladders" into the existing overstory. Harvest would be done to remove a majority of these stems, open the overstory trees, and provide a larger fuel break adjacent to Highway 200. Given the nearby Lubrecht Forest and residences further up the Garnet Range Road, this would help provide a sufficient fuel break along the road to improve ingress and egress. This project would help treat the slash produced in many places by piling, and would provide further fuel breaks within a stand that was treated in the 1990's.

The Montana DNRC is proposing to harvest up to 300 mbf of trees from this section. Harvesting would primarily include ponderosa and lodgepole pine trees. Harvesting of pulp sized material would also take place, given a market for the material. In some places it would be piled. The objectives of the proposed action would be to: 1) restore the forest to its income-generating potential; 2) capture value of dead and dying trees and prevent future value loss; 3) reduce understory trees and their stocking to promote health and vigor; 4) help reduce available wildland fuels especially along open roads; and 5) generate revenue for the trust beneficiary. All revenue would go to the Public Buildings Trust and would be generated through the implementation of the proposed action. If selected, activities would begin in the June of 2014.

The lands involved in this proposed project are held by the State of Montana in trust for the Public Buildings Fund (Enabling Act of February 22, 1889; 1972 Montana Constitution, Article X, Section 11). The Board of Land Commissioners and the DNRC are required by law to administer these trust lands to produce the largest measure of reasonable and legitimate return over the long run for the beneficiary institutions (Section 77-1-202, MCA). The DNRC has meet the goals of the management philosophy adopted through programmatic review of the State Forest Management Plan (DNRC 1996) governed by the Administrative Rules for Forest Management (ARM 36.11.401 through 471), and conservation commitments specified within the Montana Forested State Trust Lands Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) as well as other applicable state and federal laws.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

This project would involve two HB612 permits, and a furtherance of pre-commercial thinning that has been done by the DNRC in the past. DNRC specialists were consulted, including: Mike McGrath, Wildlife Biologist; and Jeff Collins, Hydrologist. Adjacent neighbors, including Lubrecht Experimental Forest, were also contacted regarding this project.

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

Slash burning would be done in compliance with statewide cooperative agreements as well as any local restrictions. All harvested volume will be hauled across DNRC or Lubrecht Experimental Forest land, or across the Garnet Range Road (BLM).

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

No Action

None of the proposed harvest or pre-commercial thinning would occur at this time. Other current land use activities and the recreational use would continue. No salvage of trees affected by mountain pine beetle would take place. No harvest would take place to reduce fuel hazard within the area.

Action Alternative

Under the Action Alternative, the DNRC would continue current land use activities, pre-commercial thinning proposed in this EA, salvage harvest of mountain pine beetle infested timber, and harvest designed to reduce fuel hazard. DNRC would continue to assess rehabilitation needs following harvest activities.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

Soils within the project area are a primarily Crow silt loams. This soil is generally very weak and can be rutted easily. There are small inclusions of Greenough silt loams. These soils are fairly similar with low soil strength, erodibility, possible rutting concerns. No unstable slopes or unique geology features are present. Soils are moderately deep silty loams on 5-30% slopes. Erosion is moderate and increases on short steep slopes. Equipment restraints during wetter conditions would reduce erosivity and prevent operations on soil with poor bearing strength. The primary risks to soil productivity are rutting, compaction, and displacement by surface equipment. Soil rutting and compaction occur when equipment operates on wet soils or repetitive trips over the same trails. Harvest operations would have low to moderate soil effects if completed when soils are relativiely dry (<15%) frozen or adequately snow covered.

Previous selection harvest was mainly on moderate slopes and skid trails have revegetated with less than 10% of impacted area based on distribution of skid trails. The proposed harvests would be completed during times that would result in minimal ground effects given contract standards. Planned ground skidding operations would have low to moderate risk of direct, in-direct and cumulative impacts based on implementing BMP's and mitigation measures. Mitigations include season of use limits, general skidding plans, use of old trails and landings, and retaining woody debris for nutrients and prompt revegetation of disturbed sites to protect soil resources. Use of these mitigations and contract specifications would be expected to produce low risk of direct and indirect effects

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

There are no streams in the project areas that would deliver sediment to streams and all harvest areas are located well away from surface waters. No wetland or riparian plants are found in the draw bottoms. The proposed salvage would use existing roads and may improve all road areas that currently have some potholes and ruts, but do not deliver sediment to surface waters or streams. The small scale of this harvest would not support road grading, but the limited road use would not be expected to further degrade road conditions from current conditions. The existing access road maintenance would be deferred and planned for completion

(deeper drain dips etc.) through future projects. Salvage harvest would occur on a minor area and primarily during the winter or the driest time of the year, when ground effects will be minimal. Skid trails and temporary roads would be stabilized by slashing and possibly by installing drainage where needed to prevent erosion. All roads and landings would be stabilized and may be grass seeded as part of the harvest project to control erosion. Recent salvage thinning combined with this small salvage/thinning harvest would not affect water yield or sediments. Based on implementation of BMP's, Forest Management Rules and mitigation measures, there would be low risk of direct, in-direct or cumulative effects to water quality or water resources.

6. AIR QUALITY:
What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

The DNRC is a member of the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group which was formed to minimize or prevent smoke impacts while using fire to accomplish land management objectives and/or fuel hazard reduction (Montana/Idaho Airshed Group 2006). The Group determines the delineation of airsheds and impact zones throughout Idaho and Montana. Airsheds describe those geographical areas that have similar atmospheric conditions, while impact zones describe any area in Montana or Idaho that the Group deems smoke sensitive and/or having an existing air quality problem (Montana/Idaho Airshed Group 2006).

The project area is in Airshed 3a which encompasses much of eastern Missoula County. Currently, this airshed does not contain any impact zones in this area. This project is located approximately 3 miles south of Greenough, Montana and 5 miles east of Potomac, Montana. Numerous residential properties are found interspersed throughout the project area. The Bob Marshall Wilderness area lies approximately 18 miles north of the project area. This wilderness area exceeds 5,000 acres and as such, is considered a Federal Class I Area that ultimately receives protection under the Federal Clean Air Act of 1977.

No Action: Under the No Action Alternative, slash piles would not be burned within the project areas. Thus, there would be no effects to air quality within the local vicinity and throughout Airshed 3a.

Action: Under the Action Alternative, slash piles consisting of tree limbs and tops and other vegetative debris would be created throughout the project area during harvesting. These slash piles would ultimately be burned after harvesting operations have been completed. Burning would introduce particulate matter into the local airshed, temporarily affecting local air quality. Over 70% of emissions emitted from prescribed burning is less than 2.5 microns (National Ambient Air Quality PM 2.5). High, short-term levels of PM 2.5 may be hazardous. Within the typical column of biomass burning, the chemical toxics are: Formaldehyde, Acrolein, Acetaldehyde, 1,4 Butadiene, and Polycyclic Organic Matter.

Burning within the project area would be short in duration and would be conducted when conditions favored good to excellent ventilation and smoke dispersion as determined by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality and the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group. Prior to burning a "Prescribed Fire Burn Plan" would be done for the area. The DNRC, as a member of the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group, would burn only on approved days. Thus, direct and indirect effects to air quality due to slash pile burning associated with the proposed action would be expected to be minimal.

Burning that may occur on adjacent properties in combination with the proposed action could potentially increase cumulative effects to the local airshed and the Class I Areas. The United States Forest Service and large scale industrial forestry operations in the area participate as airshed cooperators and operate under the same Airshed Group guidelines as the DNRC. Non-industrial timberland operators are regulated by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality and burning is only allowed during seasons that provide good ventilation and smoke dispersion. Thus, cumulative effects to air quality due to slash pile burning associated with the proposed action would also be expected to be minimal.

Harvesting and log hauling could create dust which may affect local air quality. Harvesting operations would be short in duration and could occur during the winter months which would minimize dust dispersal. Thus, direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to air quality due to harvesting and hauling associated with the proposed action would be expected to be minimal.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:
What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

No rare plants have been identified in the project area. To prevent introduction of new weeds, off-road equipment would be cleaned and inspected prior to entry into harvest areas. Newly disturbed roads and landings would be seeded to grass to reduce the spread of weeds. Noxious weed spread would not be expected to greatly increase by this action or cause cumulative impacts to vegetation based on the mitigation measures.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:
Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

No streams supporting fish or stream segments with connectivity to down slope fisheries occur within the proposed harvest area. The project access road enters Highway 200 and does not cross or parallel any fish supporting streams. The likelihood of sediment delivery is very unlikely. There would be a very low risk of direct, in-direct or cumulative effects to fish habitat or aquatic life with the proposed action.

The following species were considered but eliminated from detailed study due to lack of habitat present: Peregrine Falcon, Common Loon, Harlequin Duck, Townsend's Big-eared Bat, Coeur d'Alene Salamander, Northern Bog Lemming, Mountain Plover, and Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse.

Elk , White-tailed Deer, & Mule Deer- The project area does not contain big game winter range, but non-winter use by big game species occurs. No big game security habitat exists in the vicinity due to the open roads in the area. Proximity to Highway 200 and numerous other sources of disturbance likely modifies big game use of the project area. Ongoing mortality continues to alter tree densities and hiding cover in the project area.

No direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to big game would be anticipated under the no-action alternative.

Proposed activities associated with the action alternative could disturb big game while altering big game habitats in a small portion of the project area. The proposed harvesting and thinning would alter tree densities and visual screening. No changes to winter range or security habitat would be anticipated. Minor changes to hiding cover in a small portion of the project area could occur. Given the potential for disturbance and the potential modifications to existing habitats, a minor risk of direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to big game would be anticipated under the action alternative.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:
Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

Fisheries- No streams supporting fish or stream segments with connectivity to down slope fisheries occur within the proposed harvest area. The project access road enters Highway 200 and does not cross or parallel any fish supporting streams. The likelihood of sediment delivery would be very unlikely. No Federally listed threatened and endangered fish species or critical habitat for threatened and endangered fish species as designated by the USFWS would be affected by this project. There would be a very low risk of direct, in-direct or cumulative effects to fish habitat or aquatic life with the proposed action.

Threatened and Endangered Species
Grizzly Bear- The project area is not in the grizzly bear recovery zone or the 'occupied habitat' area as mapped by grizzly bear researchers and managers to address increased sightings and encounters of grizzly bears in habitats outside of recovery zones. Disturbance to grizzly bears in the vicinity include open roads, human habitations, Highway 200, previously mentioned timber sales, and industrial timber harvesting likely limits usefulness of the project area for grizzly bears. Open road densities in the project area are relatively high, which exposes grizzly bears to higher human disturbance levels and elevated potential for conflicts. No grizzly bear security habitat exists in the project area.

No direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to grizzly bears would be anticipated under the no-action alternative.

Proposed activities associated with the action alternative could disturb grizzly bears, but disturbance likely already limits use of the project area. Hiding cover and visual screening would be reduced with the proposed harvesting and thinning. No new open roads would be constructed, thereby minimizing long-term risk to grizzly bears. The contract would include measures to minimize exposure to unnatural bear foods or other attractants, limiting potential for habituating grizzly bears to these unnatural food sources. Given the minor disturbance risk, anticipated modifications to hiding cover and visual screening, and the mitigations measures to reduce exposure to unnatural bear foods and attractants, minor direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to grizzly bears would be anticipated with the action alternative.

Canada Lynx- No Canada lynx exists in the project area, thus no direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to Canada Lynx would be anticipated under either alternative.

Sensitive Species
The following sensitive species were considered but eliminated from detailed study due to lack of habitat present: bald eagle, black-backed woodpecker, Coeur d'Alene salamander Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, common loon, harlequin duck, mountain plover, northern bog lemming, peregrine falcon, Townsend's big-eared bat, and wolverine.

Flammulated Owl- The entire project area contains potentially suitable flammulated owl habitats. Past timber management and firewood gathering has likely altered availability of large trees and snags in the project area.

No direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to flammulated owls would be anticipated under the no-action alternative.

Proposed activities associated with the action alternative could disturb flammulated owls while creating more open stands in a small portion of the project area. The more open stand conditions, the retention of fire adapted tree species, and the maintenance of snags would move the project area toward historical conditions, which is preferred flammulated owl habitat. Given the potential for disturbance and the potential improvement in habitat quality on a small portion of the project area, a minor risk of direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to flammulated owls would be anticipated under the action alternative.

Fisher- No riparian habitats exist in the project area, but potentially suitable upland habitats exist that may be used occasionally by fisher in the vicinity. However, the proximity to Highway 200, other open roads, the Greenough area, and Lubrecht camp likely limits the usefulness of these upland habitats for use by fisher.

No direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to fisher would be anticipated under the no-action alternative.

Proposed harvesting and thinning associated with the action alternative could alter tree densities within a small amount of upland habitats in the project area, but would not be expected to appreciably alter fisher use of the area. Given the limited habitats, relatively small area, and proximity to existing disturbance, a minor risk of direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to fishers would be anticipated with the action alternative.

Gray Wolf- Three groups of wolves inhabit the vicinity of Greenough, but none of these groups have been documented in the project area. The project area contains Highway 200 as well as numerous other sources of potential disturbance from humans, which likely limits the use of the project area by gray wolves. Big game are the primary prey for gray wolves and use by big game species occurs during the non-winter period.

No direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to gray wolves would be anticipated under the no-action alternative.

Proposed activities associated with the action alternative could disturb gray wolves while altering existing habitats. The proposed actions would further reduce visual screening, which could temporarily increase wolf vulnerability in the vicinity. The proposed action would make use of topographic features and existing regeneration for screening cover post-harvest. Collectively, the modifications to big game summer and winter range could alter big game use of the project area, and subsequently alter the use of the project area by wolves. Thus, given the proximity to existing disturbance and potential for slight increases in human disturbance levels,

as well as potential shifts in big game use of the area, minor direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to gray wolves would be anticipated with the action alternative.

Pileated Woodpecker- Much of the project area contains potential pileated woodpecker habitats. Past timber management in the project area and cumulative effects analysis area has reduced large tree and snag availability.

No direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to pileated woodpeckers would be anticipated under the no-action alternative.

Proposed activities associated with the action alternative could disturb pileated woodpeckers while altering some of the continuously-forested habitats suitable for pileated woodpeckers in the project area. Habitat quality for pileated woodpeckers would decline with the proposed activities, but continued use would be likely. The silvicultural prescriptions would retain healthy ponderosa pine, western larch, and Douglas-fir while promoting the growth and/or regeneration of many of these same species, which would benefit pileated woodpeckers in the future by providing nesting, roosting, and foraging habitats. Given the proposed activities could disturb pileated woodpeckers, would reduce overall habitat quality on a small portion of the project area, but would promote long-term habitat quality, a minor risk of adverse direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to pileated woodpeckers would be anticipated with the action alternative.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:
Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

NONE
No historical or archaeological sites are known to exist within the general area of this timber permit.

11. AESTHETICS:
Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

Any change to the scenery in the area from these alternatives would be in addition to past timber harvests, road building, vegetation management (grazing, pre-commercial thinning, etc.) and future fire activity within the project area. This analysis includes all past and present effects.

No Action
If the no action alternative is selected, patches created by dead trees would exist. Potentially these openings would likely increase given the currently seen mountain pine beetle outbreak timeline. The trees that would be killed by the beetle attack would lose all foliage, and eventually branches (over several years). Although the tree bole would still be in existence, this would not be very apparent in the distance, but would be more easily seen within the middleground viewshed. The color would be lighter than the current view after the attacked trees die. Thus, direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to aesthetics would be minimal.

Action
The proposed sale would be partially visible from Highway 200 in the Greenough area. Only portions of the harvest units would be visible from any of these locations, and in many instances, the openings created would be minimal. Large portions of the proposed harvest units would be blocked from view by topography or by vegetation. The removal of bark beetle attacked trees could change the middleground view from Highway 200. Over the long term, these areas would be noticed by the absence of tree crowns, occurrence of regeneration, and potential change in species present.

Through the proposed sale area, slash from the harvest would be noticeable yet temporary. Generally slash disappears from the site within five years, and is often covered by other vegetation within three years. Again, sites would be generally lighter in color than can be seen currently.

Harvest systems and activities would be ground-based and could be done during the winter. Harvest activities would be quite audible, and, depending upon air conditions, equipment could be heard many miles from their location. The proposed harvest of this volume would most likely be done within a month and would occur during

the general “work week”. Direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to aesthetics due to harvesting and hauling associated with the proposed action would be minimal.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:
Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

NONE
No impacts are likely to occur under either alternative.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:
List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

West Lubrecht Timber Sale (DNRC TS-1400, 1998), Haywire Wallace Timber Sale (DNRC TS-1535, 2009), Elk Wall Timber Sale (DNRC TS-1680), Nemo Timber Sale (DNRC TS-1729), Nelsonville Timber Permit (TP-15,167), Greenough P.O. Timber Permit (TP-15,177), Garnet Camp Timber Permit (TP-15,255), Lubrecht Thinning (DNRC 115350), and Greenough P.O. PCT (135240FSU) are recent or current agreements on or near this parcel. No effects (cumulative or immediate) would be expected from this permit regarding the Action or No-Action and past uses. No other uses are planned for this section currently.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter “NONE” If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:
Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

YES
Log truck traffic would increase slightly on area roads for the duration of the proposed action. Signs at the highway access would be used to warn motorists and local residents.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:
Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

NONE
The proposed action would lead to a temporary increase in activity during implementation. The proposed action would include timber harvesting and log hauling.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:
Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

NONE
A few short-term jobs in the local area may be created for the duration of the proposed action.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:
Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

NONE
The proposed action would have only indirect, limited implications for tax collections.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:
Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

NONE
Aside from contract administration, the impact on government services would be expected to be minimal due to the temporary nature of the proposed action.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:
List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

NONE
The DNRC has instituted an HCP for several terrestrial and aquatic species. Currently, the DNRC uses the HCP and the State Forest Land Management Rules as environmental guidance.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:
Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

NONE The project area receives use by walk-in recreationists. Recreation opportunities would continue under the proposed action

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:
Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.

NONE
The project would have no direct implications for density and distribution of population and housing.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:
Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

NONE
The proposed action would have no direct implications for social structures and mores.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:
How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

NONE
The proposed project has no direct implications for cultural uniqueness and diversity.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:
Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

No Action: The existing grazing lease located on this DNRC parcel would continue to exist. Other activities would be looked at again in the future.

Action: This project would be expected to return to the public buildings trust approximately $31,500.00. This is calculated by multiplying the expected sawlog volume of 2,100 tons or 300 mbf. (Approximately 7 tons per thousand), and the amount paid to the DNRC (including forest improvement fees and stumpage for non sawlog material). For sawlog, an estimated price of $15.00/ ton ($105.00 / mbf.) would be paid and the money collected for forest improvement projects would be $5.51 / ton ($38.57 / mbf.). Stumpage payments for non-sawlog material would be $100.00 paid lump sum.

Approximately 75 acres would be pre-commercially thinned as part of this project. The general cost per acre recently on Clearwater Unit has ranged from $150.00 to $250.00 per acre. The projected FI earnings for the project would earn $11,571.00. Given the average prices from above, the cost of this pre-commercial thinning would be between $11,250.00 and $18,750.00.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	**Name: Craig V. Nelson**		**Date: April 21, 2014**	
	Title: Supervisory Forester, Clearwater Unit			

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Following a review of the document as well as the corresponding Department policies and rules, the Action Alternative has been selected because it meets the intent of the project objectives outlined in Section I – Type and Purpose of Action. This includes but is not limited to the requirement that DNRC administer these trust lands to produce the largest measure of reasonable and legitimate return over the long run for the beneficiary institutions (Sections 71-1-202 MCA).

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

I find that the Action Alternative will not have significant impacts for the following reasons:

- The Action Alternative is in compliance with the existing laws, rules, policies, and standards applicable to this type of proposed action.
- Appropriate mitigations have been proposed to minimize potential impacts to resources such as vegetation, soil, water quality, and wildlife.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

		EIS		More Detailed EA	**X**	No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	**Name: Kristen Baker-Dickinson**		
	Title: Unit Manager, Clearwater Unit		
Signature:	/s/ *K. Baker-Dickinson*	**Date**:	**5/8/14**

Old County Line Projects